Tramp pic

Dear Mr. Flanders, 3/28/80

Your self-serving letter of the 26, with copies of the picture and a sketch loaned to the FBI in April 1968, came today. Thanks.

If your people were less inclined to be self-serving there would be less work all around.

Your first paragraph identifies the picture of the sketch as by a newspaper artist. This is not accurate. The newspaper artist's sketch, of which I have several photographs, was made in Memphis. The sketch I loaned the FBI was made in Mexico. There can be purposefulness in this misidentification, to which I will come.

The photographs in question were not provided by Mr. Harper but by me, pursuant to a phone conversation with SA Ronald Lichtinger, then Frederick RA and on that day in the Baltimore field office. Your second paragraph also states that my pictures were returned to Mr. Harper. The records I have received, and supposedly I have all of them, do not establish this. Mr. Harper informed me that he did not receive them. Of course his memory could be faulty. Whatever the truth may be this situation would not exist today if copies had been provided to me in November 1977, when they were promised at an in camera conference in C.A. 75-1996. Since then the FBI was reminded often enough but it did nothing until compelled to act by the judge.

The sketch appears to have been copied from one of the so-called "tramp" pictures that have been the subject of much disinformation in the Kennedy assassination case. As soon as I received it in today's mail I compared it with a UPI photograph I obtained in the course of tracing this particular sketch. It is the same sketch.

UPI's NYP1509287 as put on the wire from New York, shows a Mexican policeman holding a photograph of the sketch at the Mexico City airport. The caption states that following a tip from the consulate "authorities" were alerted "to watch the Mexican border for the assassin," said to be depicted in the sketch. The date in both Mexico City and New York was April 9, 1968.

NUMEIN records provided to me in C.A. 75-1996 hold many references to the Mexico City Legat receiving a picture on that day. However, all identification was withheld.

No copy of that picture was provided in C.A. 75-1996, although I did receive two of a larger number of photographs of one man Claude Bolaren. He was not identified as the subject of the sketch.

When the FBI was questioned by the press about this sketch it went out of its way not to disavow it and limited itself to a statement that it had not authorized distribution of the sketch.

Whether or not a fake was created in error by a Oakland artist, the FBI's withholdings create a confusing situation. This could be eliminated by disclosing the picture(s) it received on April 9,1968 and all other pertinent information that must not be withheld today. The question is not one of can the FBI make an exemption claim but is it really required to. I believe it is not and I do make this request again.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg